

What the Critics Say:

Writing with the immediacy of a journalist and the flair of a novelist, Kevin Boyle produced a history that's at once an intense courtroom drama, a moving biography, and an engrossing look at race in America in the early 20th century.

- *Christian Science Monitor*

Masterfully weaving crime reporting and social history, Boyle has produced a fine and moving work.

- *Los Angeles Times*

Boyle has a keen eye for detail and a laudable aversion to idealizing his subjects. Although his affection for Sweet is clear, he's also honest -sometimes brutally so - about Sweet's weaknesses.

- *Salon.com*

An impressive work. Deftly weaving together biography, courtroom drama and social history, Mr. Boyle has produced a meticulously researched and engrossing book.

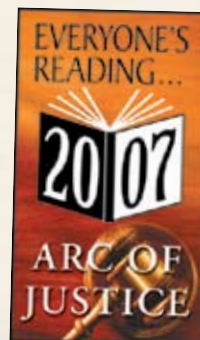
- *The New York Times*

By far the most cogent and thorough account yet of the trial and its aftermath. One of its virtues is the way Boyle vividly recreates the energy and menace of Detroit in 1925.

- *The New York Times Book Review*

This fact-filled, people-focused, readable work complements the growing literature on race in Detroit and in 20th-century U.S. urban development.

- *Library Journal*



www.everyonesreading.info



Discussion Questions for Arc of Justice

Use these questions to guide your book group in a discussion about Arc of Justice.

1. The story of Dr. Ossian Sweet is not widely known or studied. Why do you think this is so?
2. The title Arc of Justice comes from a quote often used by Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Why do you think the author chose this as a title?
3. The book begins with the shooting at Sweet's Garland Avenue house, then goes back to recount the historical and personal circumstances leading up to the event. Do you feel this style was effective? Why?
4. Dr. Sweet worked his way up from poverty to attend college and become a prominent member of society. Is that opportunity still available today and is it easier or harder than it was in the 1920s? How is it different?
5. What would you have done if faced with a dangerous situation like the Sweets?
6. Metro Detroit is often cited as the most racially segregated metropolitan community in the country. Do you think Arc of Justice gives clues as to why this has happened?
7. Who do you think was the hero of the story and why? What personal qualities or actions led you to characterize him or her as a hero?
8. The years from 1870-1920 were a period of massive societal upheaval in America. Detroit in the 1920s was a perfect example of a boomtown with a rapidly increasing population and a housing shortage. How did this environment of quick change, both social and economic, affect what happened in the book?
9. Do you personally feel that segregation is still a problem in America?
10. What do you feel this case meant to the issue of racial justice, to the NAACP, and to Detroit?

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Everyone's Reading Arc of Justice is sponsored by the following public libraries:

Baldwin Public Library
248-647-1700
www.baldwinlib.org

Bloomfield Township Public Library
248-642-5800
www.btpl.org

Canton Public Library
734-397-0999
www.cantonpl.org

Chesterfield Public Library
586-598-4900
www.chelibrary.org

Clinton-Macomb Public Library
586-226-5000
www.cmpl.org

Detroit Public Library
313-833-1000
www.detroitpubliclibrary.org

Farmington Community Library
248-553-0300
www.farmlib.org

Harper Woods Public Library
313-343-2575
www.libcoop.net/harperwoods

Lenox Township Library
586-749-3430
www.libcoop.net/lenox

Mac Donald Public Library-New Baltimore
586-725-0273
www.libcoop.net/newbaltimore

Macomb County Library
586-286-6660
www.macombcountylibrary.org

Rochester Hills Public Library
248-656-2900
www.rhpl.org

Romeo District Library-Graubner
586-752-0603
www.libcoop.net/romeo

Roseville Public Library
586-445-5407
www.rosevillelibrary.org

Royal Oak Public Library
248-246-3700
www.ropl.org

Shelby Township Library
586-739-7414
www.libcoop.net/shelby

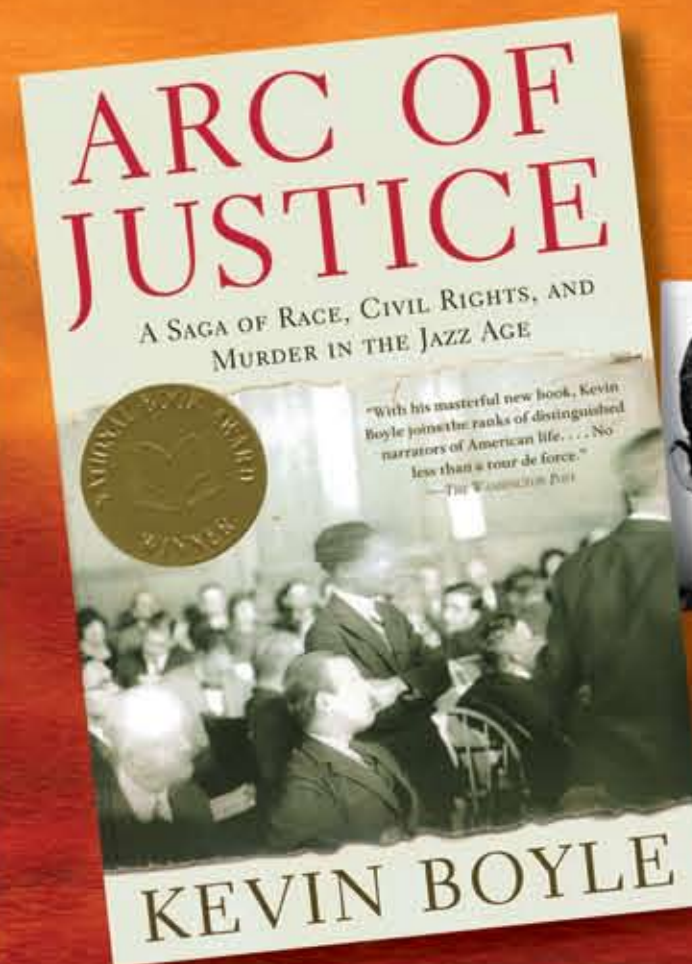
Southfield Public Library
248-796-4200
www.sfldlib.org

St. Clair Shores Public Library
586-771-9020
www.libcoop.net/stclairshores

Sterling Heights Public Library
586-446-2640
www.shpl.net

West Bloomfield Township Public Library
248-682-2120
www.wbplib.org

January 15 - April 26, 2007 Everyone's Reading



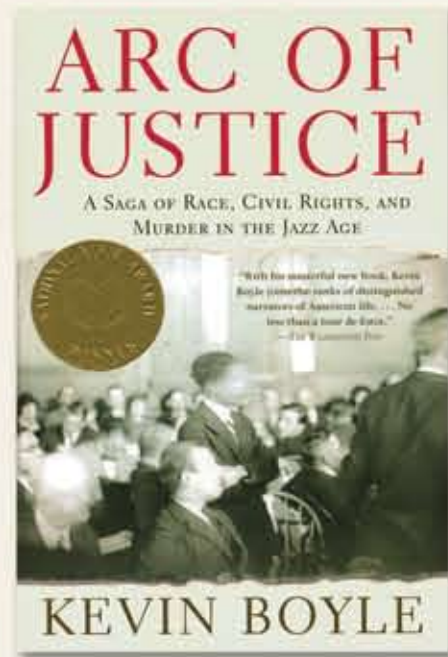
Reader's Guide



What is Everyone's Reading?

Everyone's Reading is a community wide reading program sponsored by public libraries in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties. Similar to other One Book, One Community programs across the country, Everyone's Reading promotes community dialogue through the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book.

This year's Everyone's Reading selection is Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age by Kevin Boyle.



Previous Everyone's Reading Selections:

- 2006 - Shadow Divers: The True Adventure of Two Americans Who Risked Everything to Solve One of the Last Mysteries of World War II by Robert Kurson
- 2005 - Author Elizabeth McCracken, featuring Here's Your Hat, What's Your Hurry; The Giants House; and Niagara Falls All Over Again
- 2004 - Saul and Patsy by Charles Baxter
- 2003 - A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest J. Gaines
- 2002 - Pay It Forward by Catherine Ryan Hyde

Why Read Arc of Justice?

Sometimes the national significance of local events is overlooked or underestimated. In Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age, author Kevin Boyle recounts a sensational 1925 murder trial in Detroit. The circumstances of the case and the ensuing courtroom drama had national implications for the emerging Civil Rights movement. The story of Ossian Sweet, however, is not generally well known in the Metro Detroit area.

In 1925, Detroit was a smoky swirl of jazz and speakeasies, assembly lines and fistfights. The burgeoning auto industry brought workers from around the globe to compete for manufacturing jobs, and tensions often flared. Ossian Sweet, a doctor and grandson of a slave, had made the long climb from the ghetto to a home of his own in a previously all-white, east side neighborhood. Just after his arrival, a mob gathered outside his house. Suddenly, shots rang out and a white man was dead.

Sweet, his wife and 9 other black adults were arrested, held without bail and charged with murder and conspiracy. The case attracted the attention of a fledgling NAACP, which used the situation as a way to mobilize public support for its Legal Defense Fund. With the NAACP's involvement, the upcoming trial received national attention. Clarence Darrow, the legendary labor lawyer and Scopes "Monkey Trial" defender, agreed to take the Sweet case. Arc of Justice recounts the trial, explores the politics of racism and the growing pains of a young Civil Rights movement, and poignantly captures an epic tale of a man trapped by the battles of his era's changing times. The story may be 80 years old, but it has important lessons for today.

Arc of Justice won the National Book Award for nonfiction in 2004; was a New York Times Notable Book; and was cited as one of 2004's "Best Books" by the Boston Globe, National Public Radio, Detroit Free Press, Seattle Times, and Salon.com.



Ossian Sweet



Clarence Darrow

How to Get Involved

Check out Arc of Justice from a participating public library (see a list of participating libraries on page 6 of this Reader's Guide).

Discuss the book and participate in the programs.

Use this guide to lead your own book discussion group or attend one of the special Everyone's Reading events listed in the program brochure and at www.everyonesreading.info.

Attend Malice Aforethought: The Sweet Trials presented by the University of Detroit Mercy Theatre Company. Written by Arthur Beer, the play dramatizes the Sweet Trials. Performances are February 2-4, 8-11, and 15-18. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact The Theatre Company, University of Detroit Mercy, 4001 W. McNichols, Detroit, MI 48221 / 313-993-3270 or go to <http://theatre.udmercy.edu>

View the Sweets Project Exhibit

See images from the Sweet's Trial and 1920's Detroit in this exhibit on loan from The University of Detroit Mercy. Go to www.everyonesreading.info for the list of libraries that will host the exhibit and exhibit dates.

About the Author

Kevin Boyle, a native Detroiter, is currently a professor of history at Ohio State University where he teaches twentieth century American history, with an emphasis on class, race and politics. Dr. Boyle received his B.A. from the University of Detroit in 1982 and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1990.

Articles by Kevin Boyle have appeared in Diplomatic History, Journal of American History, Labor History, The Michigan Historical Review and various anthologies. He has also published essays and reviews in the Baltimore Sun, Chicago Tribune, Detroit Free Press, New York Times, and Washington Post.

Additionally, Dr. Boyle has held fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. He serves on the advisory board for the Walter P. Reuther Library, and on the editorial boards of Labor History and Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas. He is also a Fellow of the Society of American Historians and member of the PEN American Center.

His previous books include The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968 and, with co-author Victoria Getis, Muddy Boots and Ragged Aprons: Images of Working-Class Detroit, 1900-1930.

Meet the Author

Join author Kevin Boyle to hear about his experiences writing Arc of Justice. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing by the author.

Saturday, February 3 at 2 PM
Detroit Public Library

Sunday, February 4 at 1:30 PM
Farmington Community Library
Main Library Auditorium

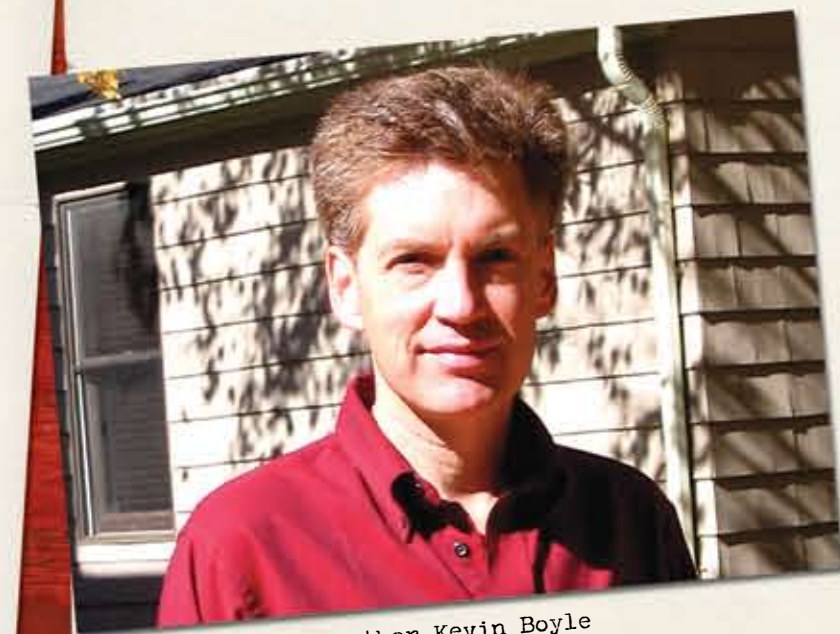
Monday, April 16 at 1 PM
Clinton-Macomb
Public Library-Main

Monday, April 16 at 7 PM
Baldwin Public Library
The Community House
380 Bates Street (south of the library)

Tuesday, April 17 at 2 PM
Southfield Public Library
Auditorium

Tuesday, April 17 at 7 PM
Rochester Hills Public Library
Multipurpose Room

Wednesday, April 18 at 7 PM
Canton Public Library
Community Room



author Kevin Boyle

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